

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2022

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen,

We write today in strong support of Governor Brown's letter reiterating Oregon's request for additional Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program funding. Many working families in Oregon were already struggling with housing costs or covering rent before the pandemic upended their lives and our economy. Federal rental assistance has been a critical lifeline for them, and we must continue to make it available for people when they need it most. As the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) continues to distribute ERA funding through its reallocation authority, we urge you to support Governor Brown's request and consider the clear need to increase the support available for Oregonians who are facing eviction.

Thank you for your commitment to rapidly deploying these resources to stave off what could have been a national wave of mass evictions. Treasury's work has been essential to Oregonians who have received this funding. Now, as the Omicron variant is surging, the reallocation authority Congress provided under this program is critical to preventing another eviction crisis. Beyond the essential federal resources, Oregon has invested additional and historic levels of funding in rental assistance throughout the pandemic. In 2020, the Oregon State Legislature committed \$200 million to compensate landlords and deliver rental assistance,¹ and just last month the state of Oregon invested an additional \$100 million.²

Even with this supplemental state funding, there will still be many Oregonians who could be left behind in accessing rental assistance. Our state's housing agency, Oregon Housing and Community Services, projects that the new state investment will not meet the demand of both new applications and those that have already been submitted. Although we are appreciative of the \$1.1 million distributed to Oregon in the first tranche of reallocation funding, thousands of Oregonians are again facing eviction notices and are at even greater risk of experiencing

¹ Landlord Compensation Fund, Oregon Housing and Community Services, accessible online [here](#).

² *Oregon Legislature approves \$400 million in spending to address rent assistance, other emergencies*, accessible online [here](#), Oregon Public Broadcasting, December 13, 2021.

homelessness. A spike in evictions would be especially dangerous to public health. Further, Portland State University's Homeless Research and Action Center projected that evictions in Oregon could cost the state from \$720 million up to \$4.7 billion or more as people displaced from their homes would raise use of health, shelter, and child welfare services.³

We appreciate the work by Treasury to distribute this funding and reduce evictions nationwide. To allow Oregonians the best chance at a safe and stable recovery, we want to reiterate our support of Governor Brown's request to increase ERA reallocation funding to our state. We look forward to your response and our continued work together to prevent unnecessary evictions.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

Cc: Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo, American Rescue Plan Coordinator,
Senior Advisor to the President Gene Sperling

³ Lisa K. Bates, Marisa Zapata, Jacen Greene, & Stefanie Knowlton, *Updated Cost of Oregon Evictions Report*, accessible online [here](#), June 28, 2021.